

FROM: OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY NEWS SERVICES  
190 N. OVAL DR., COLUMBUS, OHIO 43210  
Phone: (Area Code 614) 422-2711

6-6-74  
(SP)

Hold for release at 9:30 a.m. Friday, June 7, 1974

"The Score in Ohio Stadium Today is 15 1/2 to 1"

Address by Milton A. Caniff

Ohio State University Spring Commencement, Ohio Stadium

PRESIDENT ENARSON, MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY, REVEREND CLERGY, MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF JUNE 1974, THEIR PARENTS AND FRIENDS -- BUT MOST ESPECIALLY THE PARENTS -- THE ONLY PERSONS HERE WHO PAID TO GET IN!

THE PUZZLING TITLE, DESIGNED AS A GRABBER (TO TAKE YOUR MIND OFF THE VAST MATHEMATICS OF SOARING INFLATION) IS THE EQUATION WHICH STATES YOUR CHANCES, AS COLLEGE GRADUATES, OF BEING HERE AT ALL. THERE ARE 12,880,000 PEOPLE YOUR AGE IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY AND ONLY 981,000 INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING BACHELOR DEGREES ACROSS THE NATION THIS YEAR.

MY FUNCTION HERE IS NOT UNLIKE THE JOURNALISTS' ARGUMENT THAT THE ENTIRE BIBLE COULD BE CONDENSED TO TWO WORDS -- "BE GOOD."

MY TEXT TO GUIDE YOUR LIFE FOLLOWING GRADUATION MAY BE CONTRACTED INTO BERNARD BARUCH'S ADMONITION THAT: "I CANNOT TELL YOU HOW TO SUCCEED, BUT I CAN TELL YOU HOW TO FAIL -- TRY TO PLEASE EVERYBODY!"

AS EVERY COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER KNOWS, THERE ARE ALSO

GRAVE DANGERS LURKING IN HIS WORDS. IN MY OWN CASE, IT WAS JUST AFTER THE GREAT SUCCESS OF MARGARET MITCHELL'S "GONE WITH THE WIND" AND THE PEOPLE OF GEORGIA WERE ONCE AGAIN DEEPLY AWARE OF THEIR HERITAGE IN BOTH LOVE AND HATE.

IN THE MIDST OF THIS, I WAS MAKING THE GRADUATION DAY ADDRESS AT THE ATLANTA LAW SCHOOL. ATTEMPTING TO ADD LOCAL FLAVOR TO MY THESIS I BEGAN: "THIS IS THE FIRST TIME ANY MEMBER OF MY FAMILY HAS SET FOOT IN ATLANTA SINCE MY GREAT GRANDFATHER CAME THROUGH HERE WITH SHERMAN'S OHIO CAVALRY."

THE ENSUING SILENCE WAS GRIM, THREATENING AND ILLUMINATING!

IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT I HAD A CONDITION IN MATH WHEN I WAS ENROLLED HERE AS A FRESHMAN, I CAN COUNT UP THAT IT HAS BEEN 44 YEARS ALMOST TO THE DAY THAT I SAT IN THIS SAME STADIUM, DIMLY AWARE THAT SOME GENTLE CREATURE WAS ATTEMPTING TO POINT THE WAY TO PROMOTION AND PAY TO AN UNCOMFORTABLE THROG OF YOUNG CREATURES, QUAKING, EITHER FROM RELIEF AT FINALLY GRADUATING, OR FROM FEAR OF THE ALREADY OBVIOUS SUICIDE MISSION OF JOINING THE 1930 WORK FORCE (WHEN THERE WAS NONE!)

THIS COMMENCEMENT THING IS AN AMBIVALENT RITUAL. ON THE ONE HAND YOU ARE BURSTING TO TURN THE MICKEY MOUSE OUTFITS BACK TO THE COSTUME DEPARTMENT AND HIT THE GRIT FOR CHILLICOTHE OR ASHTABULA, DESPERATELY GLAD TO LEAVE THE BIG FARM--AND DETERMINED TO STAY AWAY FROM THE CAMPUS FOREVER (OR AT LEAST UNTIL YOU GET THOSE TICKETS TO A MICHIGAN GAME!)

AT THE SAME TIME, YOU ARE PLEASED THAT SOMEONE DEVISED



THIS MEANS OF MARKING THE DAY AND TIME THAT YOU FINALLY GOT IT ALL TOGETHER AND WERE ABLE TO BRING THE FOLKS TO COLUMBUS FOR THE SNAPSHOTS IN THE CAP AND GOWN AGAINST THE STADIUM BACKGROUND.

THE CONSUMING EUPHORIA OF RELIEF BECAUSE YOU FINALLY MADE IT HAS NOT DETERRED YOU FROM AN URGE TO WITNESS AND PARTICIPATE IN THIS FINAL MORRIS DANCE OF TRADITION. YOU COULD HAVE RECEIVED THE SHEEPSKIN BY MAIL, BUT YOU WERE WILLING TO BE A PART OF A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE ONCE AGAIN AND BE HARANGUED FOR YET ANOTHER TIME. ALREADY YOU SENSE THAT YOU HAVE CUT THE UMBILICAL AND CAN NEVER AGAIN RETREAT TO THE COMFORTABLE WOMB OF UNDER-GRADUATE LIFE. MOST OF YOU WILL NEVER AGAIN WEAR A CAP AND GOWN. NOW YOU MUST DIG IN AND START THE LONG JOURNEY WHICH BEGINS WITH A SINGLE STEP, WHICH YOU HOPE WILL GET YOU AHEAD OF YOUR CREDITORS AND THE OTHER HURDLES YOU KNOW TO BE LURKING BEYOND 15TH AND HIGH.

A GRAVE DANGER IS PRESENT WHEN AN ALUMNUS IS INVITED TO MAKE A COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS AT HIS OWN COLLEGE. FROM THE FIRST MOMENT OF ACCEPTANCE THE FLOOD-GATES OF RECOLLECTION ARE OPENED AND HE IS TEMPTED TO DEPART FROM THE ASSIGNED TASK OF POINTING THE WORLDLY WAY TO THE EAGER YOUNG GRADUATES. ALL OF THE MISERIES OF HIS OWN PURSUIT OF THE ELUSIVE MUSE FALL AWAY AND ONLY THE JOLLY ANECDOTES COME TUMBLING FROM THE PIGEON RACKS OF MEMORY. BUT PERHAPS THERE IS A PLACE FOR THEM HERE. FOR INSTANCE-

NOW IN MY DAY ...

THERE IS SOME TIMELESS THREAD WHICH BINDS US TO THIS PLACE.  
IT MUST BE MORE THAN COLORS, SONGS AND HALF-REMEMBERED NAMES!  
WHEN FIRST I WALKED THE OVAL, FRIGHTENED, HOMESICK, UNPREPARED;  
IT SEEMED IT ALL BEGAN THAT DAY... THAT NOT A SOUL HAD BEEN THIS  
WAY BEFORE.

MY ERA SCOFFED AT TALES OF GLORY PAST: OHIO FIELD AND OTHER  
ANCIENT LORE.

THEN, WHEN MY JUNE CAME--AND PUT THE MILES BETWEEN THE TOWN AND  
GOWN,

I THOUGHT THE BOOKS WERE CLOSED--IN FACT--AND IN THE AUDIT SENSE.  
INSTEAD I FOUND MYSELF IN GROUPS WHOSE PRIMAL BOND WAS ALMA MATER  
SHARED;

WHERE AGE AND COLLEGE YEAR BECAME STATISTICS LAUGHED AWAY...  
OUR COMMON NICHE 15<sup>TH</sup> AND HIGH, WHEN FAILURE NEVER FAINTLY LOOMED.

NO CLASS BEFORE OR SINCE GIVES HOOT THAT MINE MARCHED OUT TO  
PANIC'S TUNE.

DEPRESSION CHANGED OUR LIVES, BUT TALK ABOUT IT BORES, SO LET  
IT PASS AWAY.

IMPORTANT IS THE FACT THAT ORTON'S CHIMES REACHED EVERY STUDENT EAR.  
WHO CARES WHICH YEAR YOU MADE THE FIRST LONG TREK TO FINALS GRIND,  
AGAINST THAT ARCTIC WIND WHICH ADDLED WITS ALREADY TURNED TO WHEY.

THE PLACES FAVORED ONCE FOR DATE AND DAWDLE GO EPHEMERAL WAYS...  
BUT IN THEIR LITTLE SPAN THEY WERE COLUMBUS FOR THE LONG RECALL.  
THOSE WARM RETREATS WHERE DREAMS BEGAN AND LOVE WAS CHRISTENED  
WITH A COKE



IT LITTLE MATTERS WHETHER HERE OR GONE, NOSTALGIA MAKES THEM  
 INNS OF ELEGANCE,  
 OUR MERMAID TAVERNS, FIT FOR STUDENT PRINCE, HOWEVER, PAUPERIZED.

YOU KNOW THE LINK IS THERE WHEN SOMEONE MAKES A MARK, ACHIEVES  
 RENOWN:  
 AND THOUGH YOU'VE NEVER MET, YOU GLOW WITH PRIDE BECAUSE HE  
 WENT TO STATE.  
 THAT DAY WILL COME FOR YOU ON CAMPUS NOW--IT'S BUILDING HOUR BY  
 HOUR.  
 YOU'RE ANXIOUS TO GET ON WITH WHAT YOU'VE PLANNED--AND SCHOOL'S  
 A DRAG --  
 BUT ON SOME FUTURE DATE THE FLASH WILL COME--THE GOOD OLD DAYS  
 ARE THESE! -- I HOPE YOU USED THEM WELL!

ONE REASON I ENROLLED AT OHIO STATE WAS THAT A  
 THOUGHTFUL ART TEACHER AT DAYTON STIVERS HIGH SCHOOL POINTED  
 OUT THAT, SINCE I, AT THAT TIME, HOPED TO BECOME AN EDITORIAL  
 CARTOONIST, A LARGE INSTITUTION (WHICH OFFERED A FINE ARTS  
 DEGREE) WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO ME THAN A STRAIGHT ART SCHOOL  
 BECAUSE THE CAMPUS POPULATION WOULD BE A MINIATURE OF THE NEWS-  
 PAPER READERS I SHOULD BE TRYING TO INFLUENCE IN FUTURE. IN  
 ADDITION, I WOULD BE COMPELLED TO BROADEN MY FUZZY HORIZONS BY  
 TAKING COURSES FAR AFIELD FROM MY ART MAJOR.

I VERY QUICKLY LEARNED THIS LOVE-HATE PATTERN SO  
 OFTEN PRESENT IN LATER LIFE. ONE QUARTER I RECEIVED 99 IN  
 A FINAL EXAMINATION IN ONE COURSE, WHILE FAILING MY MAJOR IN

"THE HISTORY OF FINE ARTS." THE DETAILS ARE NOT IMPORTANT EXCEPT THAT SIMILAR INCONGRUITIES ARE A PART OF DAILY LIVING IN POST-COLLEGE TIMES.

ON THE SIMPLE FACE OF IT, THE GRIMNESS OF FAILURE WAS OFFSET BY THE FACT THAT I WAS WORKING AT NIGHT ON THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH. THE REQUIRED ART HISTORY CLASS MET AT 9 A.M. ON A SPRING QUARTER MORNING. CONSISTING MOSTLY OF SLIDE FILMS PROJECTED IN THE DARKENED ROOM, I FELL ASLEEP AT THE MOMENT THE SHUTTERS WERE CLOSED. MY TRIUMPH DURING THE SAME ACADEMIC TIME-SPREAD WAS TEMPERED (AS ARE SO MANY SUCH VICTORIES AFTER COLLEGE) BY MISSING A PERFECT MARK BY ONE LOUSY POINT.

NOW TO THAT MOMENT WHEN, IN ORDER TO PROTECT MY FRANCHISE IN THE COMMENCEMENT SPEAKERS' UNION, I MUST OFFER YOU ADVICE ON HOW TO CONDUCT YOURSELVES ONCE YOU HAVE DEPARTED THESE HALLOWED HALLS. EVEN A "LORD CHESTERFIELD" OR A POLONIUS CAN ONLY TELL IT THE WAY IT LOOKS FROM HIS LITTLE CORNER, BUT THE WORLD CHANGES SO RAPIDLY -- AND THERE HAS BEEN SUCH A WIDENING GAP BETWEEN THE GENERATIONS -- THAT THE CLICHÉS HAVE GROWN FRESH WITH RETELLING.

AT THIS POINT I MIGHT INVOKE THE ANCIENT DEVICE OF DIRECTING YOU TO LOOK TO YOUR RIGHT, THEN TO YOUR LEFT: AFTER WHICH I ASTOUND YOU WITH THE STATEMENT THAT THE PERSON SITTING NEXT TO YOU WILL FAIL IN HIS LIFE'S WORK. IT IS A GOOD DODGE, BUT I HAVE NOT DEFINED SUCCESS. WHO AM I TO TELL YOU WHAT IS A FRUITFUL CAREER IN DENTISTRY, OR ENGINEERING. WE ALL KNOW THAT IT IS PLEASANT TO EARN A PILE OF MONEY PLYING OUR TRADE,



BUT WE ALSO REALIZE MORE AND MORE THAT THE TINKLING TRAPPINGS OF AFFLUENCE ARE NOT ENOUGH. HOWEVER SATISFYING IT MUST BE FOR A DOCTOR TO RELIEVE PAIN FOR A GOOD FEE, IT IS CERTAINLY MORE GRATIFYING TO HAVE HELPED FIND A WAY TO PREVENT THE CRIPPLING AILMENT AT INCUBATION ON A RESEARCH GRANT.

IF YOU WERE NOT INTERESTED IN SYMBOLS OF ACHIEVEMENT YOU WOULD NOT BE SITTING HERE RIGHT NOW, CLUTCHING THAT HANDSOME ROLL OF PAPER WHICH DECLARES YOU TO BE A SMARTIE. DON'T PLAY DOWN THE MARKET VALUE OF THE OFTEN MALIGNED DEGREE. BEYOND THE SATISFACTION YOU HAVE IN EARNING IT, IT SAVES AN EMPLOYER'S TIME IN APPRAISING YOUR POTENTIAL.

FOR INSTANCE: WHEN I WENT TO NEW YORK DURING THE DEPRESSION, THE "NEW YORK NEWS" REQUIRED A COLLEGE DEGREE OF ALL APPLICANTS FOR OFFICE BOY JOBS.

AGAIN, I CANNOT GUIDE YOU PROFESSIONALLY, I CAN ONLY URGE UPON YOU THE SATISFACTION OF DOING WELL WHATEVER IS YOUR RATIONALE.

JOSEPH CONRAD SAID:

"SUCH SKILL, THE SKILL OF TECHNIQUE, IS MORE THAN HONESTY; IT IS SOMETHING WIDER, EMBRACING HONESTY AND GRACE AND RULE IN AN ELEVATED AND CLEAR SENTIMENT, NOT ALTOGETHER UTILITARIAN, WHICH MAY BE CALLED THE HONOR OF LABOR. IT IS MADE UP OF ACCUMULATED TRADITION, KEPT ALIVE BY INDIVIDUAL PRIDE, RENDERED EXACT BY PROFESSIONAL

OPINION, AND, LIKE THE HIGHER ARTS, IT IS SPURRED ON  
AND SUSTAINED BY DISCRIMINATING PRAISE.

"THAT IS WHY THE ATTAINMENT OF PROFICIENCY, THE  
PUSHING OF YOUR SKILL WITH ATTENTION TO THE MOST DELICATE  
SHADES OF EXCELLENCE, IS A MATTER OF VITAL CONCERN. EFFICIENCY  
OF A PRACTICALLY FLAWLESS KIND MAY BE REACHED NATURALLY IN  
THE STRUGGLE FOR BREAD. BUT THERE IS SOMETHING BEYOND -- A  
HIGH POINT, A SUBTLE AND UNMISTAKABLE TOUCH OF LOVE AND PRIDE  
BEYOND MERE SKILL; ALMOST AN INSPIRATION WHICH GIVES ALL WORK  
THAT FINISH WHICH IS NOT ALMOST ART -- IT IS ART!"

AND NOW, IF I MAY PARAPHRASE SOMETHING OF MINE:

IN THIS VAST, REWARDING LAND, WHERE TROUBLE IS, AS ALWAYS,  
OPPORTUNITY DISGUISED IN WORKING CLOTHES...

WHERE, IN THE MIDST OF WAILS OF DISADVANTAGE AND DECAY,

THERE YET ARISE UNSHACKLED MEN WHO SCOFF AT WHINING ODDS.  
WE ARE A PEOPLE OF OUR OWN DESIGN AND PURPOSE -- YOUNG ENOUGH A  
NATION

THAT THE ATROPHY OF DISMAL PORTENT HAS NOT COOLED OUR  
ZEAL...

HENCE, IN THAT HARD-EARNED SHEEPSKIN LIES THE PASSPORT TO A  
SCENE OF LONG HORIZONS, PAST AND FUTURE; THEN AND NOW.

YOU'LL HEAR THE WEASEL WORDS OF HARPIES BENDING TO THE BLOW OF  
TEMPORARY HURT, BUT WHEN THE GOING'S TOUGH, THINK BACK  
ON ALL THE YOUNG AMERICANS, MUCH LIKE YOU, WHO PASSED THE TEST  
WHEN BLEAKNESS DULLED THE FUTURE OF THEIR LAND.



NOW THE DAY IS YOURS! DON'T WAIT FOR 'OTHER GUYS' TO DO THE JOB --  
TO CARRY HIGH THE HALLMARK OF OUR FAITH IN WHAT WE'VE WON.  
THE 'OTHER GUY' IS YOU!

-----

REMEMBER -- AS THE CHINESE SAY:-

"A WISE MAN WHO HAS SEEN EVERYTHING IS NOT THE EQUAL  
OF THE PERSON WHO HAS DONE ONE THING WITH HIS HANDS."